

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
ORANGEBURG DIVISION**

Lance Rice,

Plaintiff,

v.

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social
Security,

Defendant.

Civil Action No. 5:19-cv-01091-TLW

ORDER

This matter is before the Court for review of Counsel for Plaintiff's motion for attorney's fees and costs pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), 28 U.S.C. § 2412. ECF No. 15. The Commissioner filed a response that the government does not object to EAJA fees in the amount of Two Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Nine dollars and 38/100 (\$2,949.38) and expenses in the amount of Twenty dollars and 85/100 (\$20.85). ECF No. 17.

Under the EAJA, a court shall award attorney's fees to a prevailing party in certain civil actions against the United States unless the court finds that the government's position was substantially justified or special circumstances make an award unjust. 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d)(1)(A). To determine whether the Commissioner was "substantially justified" in denying social security benefits and thus whether an award of attorney's fees under the EAJA is warranted, the court asks whether there was arguably substantial evidence to support the Commissioner's position. *Anderson v. Heckler*, 756 F.2d 1011 (4th Cir. 1984). An EAJA attorney's fees award is payable to the litigant and, therefore, is subject to an offset to satisfy the litigant's pre-existing debt to the Government. *Astrue v. Ratliff*, 560 U.S. 586, 594 (2010).

After careful consideration of the record and the applicable legal authority, the Court concludes that the requested fees should be awarded. As noted, the Commissioner does not object

to fees in the amount of \$2,949.38 and expenses in the amount of \$20.85, to be offset by the amount of Plaintiff's pre-existing federal debts. *See Astrue*, 560 U.S. at 594.

Having reviewed the filings and being fully advised, it is **ORDERED** that the motion for attorney's fees under the EAJA, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, ECF No. 15, is **GRANTED**, and the Commissioner is ordered to award Plaintiff \$2,949.38 in attorney fees and \$20.85 in expenses, offset by Plaintiff's pre-existing federal debts, for all legal services rendered on behalf of Plaintiff by counsel in connection with this civil action.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Terry L. Wooten
Terry L. Wooten
Senior United States District Judge

January 2, 2020
Columbia, South Carolina